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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between teaching assistant (TA) development programs and faculty preparation programs, the commonalities between the two types of program, and the issues to be considered when making the transition from the former to the latter. It notes that many institutions adopted TA training programs in the 1980s in response to the demand for improved teaching, and that in the 1990s a number of institutions adopted programs to prepare graduate students to become faculty members. In examining what the two types of program have in common, the paper notes that both ultimately seek to improve the quality of undergraduate education. It then addresses considerations for institutions seeking to transform their TA training programs into Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) programs, including providing graduate students with the opportunity to work with mentors, access to advanced teaching assignments, opportunities to participate in academic service activities, access to professional development and career development programs, faculty involvement and leadership, and the establishment of partnerships with diverse institutions. (Contains 24 references.) (MDM)

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PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FACULTY PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Stacey Lane Tice
Assistant Dean of the Graduate School
Director of the Teaching Assistant Program
Syracuse University

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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

The Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) Program is a joint effort of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) to enhance the careers of tomorrow's college professors. The first phase of this initiative, 1993–97, concentrated on the development of new models of graduate preparation that stress learning for research as well as for teaching and service roles. A total of 17 doctoral universities received grants ranging from $10,000 to $170,000 from The Pew Charitable Trusts to develop and implement model programs. A stipulation of the grant was that the doctoral universities assemble a small cluster of diverse colleges and universities to bring the "consumers" of doctoral degrees significant together with the "producers." A total of 85 institutions of higher learning participated in this significant undertaking. By and large these programs were found to work well, generate much enthusiasm among the graduate students, and to produce amazing results.

A second phase of PFF will extend the initiative into the year 2000. Because PFF has learned the value of these new models, the current work is designed to help institutions with modest sized programs to "scale up" to provide more graduate students with access to PFF programs and to spread such programs to other sites. Through separate competitions, 10 of the original clusters were selected to participate in the second phase, along with five other universities that had developed their own PFF-like programs.

Throughout this work, it was assumed that PFF programs would build on solid programs that promote the development of teaching assistants. Yet, PFF has not fully analyzed the relationship between PFF and TA development programs. Further, occasional tension was sensed in concepts and approaches between leaders in these two types of programs. Stacey Lane Tice was commissioned to write an essay exploring the historical roots of both types of programs and to articulate their similarities and differences. In addition, the services of three national leaders in the teaching assistant development initiative were engaged to serve as an advisory group to Tice. These leaders are Nancy Chism from The Ohio State University, Jody Nyquist from the University of Washington, and Marilla Svinicki from the University of Texas. Tice prepared outlines, and subsequently drafts, and the advisers critiqued them. Although this essay does not reflect the views of the advisors, their comments and suggestions make it a better document than could have been written independently. PFF is grateful to all of these individuals for clarifying the understanding of issues intersecting the PFF and teaching assistant development programs.

Additional information about the Preparing Future Faculty program, including program descriptions, assessment results, and additional publications can be obtained from the World Wide Web sites of the sponsoring organizations. Also, additional information may be obtained from the leaders of the PFF program listed below.

Jerry G. Gaff
Director, Preparing Future Faculty
Association of American Colleges and Universities
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202/387-3760
Gaff@AACU.NW.DC.US
www.aacu-edu.org

Anne S. Pruitt-Logan
Co-Director, Preparing Future Faculty
Council of Graduate Schools
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 430
Washington, DC 20036
202/223-3791
Apruitt@CGS.NCHE.EDU
www.cgsnet.org

The quality of undergraduate education and the redefinition of graduate (especially doctoral) preparation for the professoriate and other professional careers is of growing concern to educational leaders. Over the past decade, the preparation of future faculty has been addressed through several initiatives. They include retention programs, advising improvements, teaching assistant (TA) development programs and, more recently, faculty preparation programs. A fuller examination of these programs indicates points of intersection and developing issues that have led to concrete suggestions for making the transition from an effective TA development program to a faculty preparation program possible and necessary.

TEACHING ASSISTANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

A significant portion of introductory and developmental courses offered at research universities is taught, at least in part, by teaching assistants (Eble 1987; Syverson and Tice 1993). For many years, teaching assistantships were viewed solely as a means of providing financial support for graduate study. Little regard was

given to the impact of TAs on undergraduate education or how this experience could better prepare graduate students for future academic careers. While these concerns are not new—they date back to the early 1930's (Nyquist, Abbott, Wulff 1989)— public demand for greater accountability and quality in undergraduate education has created renewed interest in the issues.

In the 1980's, many institutions organized TA-orientation programs in response to the demand for improved teaching. These prototypic orientation programs provided a valuable introduction to new TAs. Yet they came to be viewed as only a necessary first step in TA development. As university-wide or centralized efforts matured, greater numbers of universities offered comprehensive year-round programming on a variety of topics on teaching and learning. These programs included such activities as university-wide and departmental seminars and workshops, mid-semester feedback surveys, outstanding TA awards programs, consultation services, TA newsletters, teaching portfolios, and certificate programs (Lambert 1993).

The 1990s brought a national focus to preparing graduate students for future faculty positions with the publication of *Preparing Graduate Students to Teach: A Guide to Programs That Improve Undergraduate Education and Develop Tomorrow's Faculty* (Lambert and Tice 1993). The Council of Graduate Schools, TIAA-CREF, and The Pew Charitable Trusts sponsored the book published by the American Association for Higher Education. The biannual national conferences (between 1986 and 1997) sponsored by a National Consortium have evolved to include more of a disciplinary focus, involving faculty, graduate students, and deans from many different fields of study. In 1994 and 1997, the consortium, with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, hosted workshops on "Preparing Graduate Students to Teach." According to Boyer (1990), "Teaching assistant programs, perhaps more than any other, are crucial in the preparation of future teachers."

A 1991 survey of the Council of Graduate Schools membership revealed that most institutions had some type of TA development program. At that time, eighty-three percent of the centralized programs were less than ten years old, with nearly sixty percent having been developed in the last one to four years. In contrast, the departmental programs had a longer tradition with fifty-one percent in existence for more than eleven years. Virtually every institution had some combination of centralized and departmental efforts (Syverson & Tice 1993).

Regardless of the structure, whether centralized or departmental, most comprehensive programs bring attention to both content or what is being taught, and how it relates to the discipline, as well as methodology, or how the content is presented to maximize student learning (Lambert 1993). This might include, for example, some component of cognitive learning theory, pedagogical issues, and attention to the learning environment and the diversity of the student population (Wiener, Svinicki, Bauer 1989; Chism, Cano, and Pruitt 1989).

Leadership for the centralized programs comes primarily from one of three sources: (1) TA or faculty development centers; (2) the graduate school; and (3) less frequently, from the school of education. Longer-standing departmental programs were established and often led by one or two faculty members in the department (Syverson & Tice 1993). Faculty leaders and leaders of centralized programs have often cited barriers to the conduct of their programs, including the ethos of the university and/or department, the hegemony of research, and the low stature of teaching in the research university. Faculty leaders in particular have commented about their feelings of isolation and belief that their departmental programs would be crippled if they did not continue their personal involvement (Hutchings 1993).

PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAMS

In the early 1990's it became apparent to TA developers, funding organizations, and national educational organizations that to create a lasting change in the academy, discussion needed to progress from talk about preparation for undergraduate teaching to that of professional development of graduate students for careers in the academy, of which teaching is a component. Gaff and Lambert (1996) write:

> Traditional doctoral study prepares graduate students to be better students, in the classic sense of the term, that is, to conduct studies. TA training prepares students to be better teaching assistants, and to the extent that the assignments are meaningful and support is provided, perhaps better college teachers. Preparing Future Faculty programs prepare graduate students to be better assistant professors, an outcome that subsumes the other two.

Focusing attention on graduate education allows a broader impact to be made on future faculty who are shaping their professional attitudes and values (Boyer 1990). Following Boyer's publication of *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate* (1990), faculty members have discussed and debated the meaning of scholarly work. Efforts to rethink traditional definitions are being undertaken within disciplines and on individual campuses (Adam and Roberts 1993). Preparing graduate students for a broader definition of scholarly work will position them for success in balancing responsibilities for teaching, research, and service in future faculty positions at all types of institutions. This is worth noting because fewer than ten percent of new Ph.D.s

end up in faculty positions at research universities. Most new Ph.D.s secure academic employment at institutions that are very different from the ones in which they are educated (Gaff and Lambert 1996).

Virtually all new faculty members rate their work as stressful. Unfortunately, the tensions of the first year do not appear to be offset by experience. The predominant source of stress stems primarily from the pressures of finding enough time to get everything done (Boice 1992; Turner and Boice 1989; Fink 1984; Sorcinelli 1992; Whitt 1991). The cost of recruiting new faculty, a decrease in mobility in academic careers, and the stress on new faculty appointments all argue for careful selection and better preparation for the next generation of college and university faculty.

Several programs have been specially designed to help socialize future faculty and to enable a smoother transition from graduate school to a faculty position. They include: (1) the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U) FIPSE-sponsored project titled Preparing Graduate Students for the Professional Responsibilities of College Teachers; (2) an early Council of Independent Colleges' FIPSE-sponsored project also titled Preparing Future Faculty; (3) Syracuse University's Future Professoriate Project, launched in 1991; (4) the Compact for Faculty Diversity, launched in 1994 by the New England Board of Higher Education, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education; (5) Preparing Future Faculty (PFF), launched in 1993, sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools; and (6) Preparing Future Professors: A New York State Consortium Project, funded by FIPSE and initiated in 1994, which entails a collaboration with Cornell University, New York University, the State University of New York at Binghamton and Stony Book, and Syracuse University. These programs all seek to redefine graduate education to better prepare graduate students for all aspects of scholarship and teaching necessary for their success in academe.

There programs share common elements: (1) mentoring of the graduate students by a faculty member (Gaff and Lambert 1996); (2) attention to the developmental stage of the student (Spraque and Nyquist 1991) (3) increasingly independent and varied teaching experiences (Gaff and Lambert 1996); (4) portfolio development to demonstrate the range and effectiveness of professional experiences (Lambert 1996; Seldin 1997); (5) TA training efforts that serve as the groundwork; and (6) efforts to achieve a balance of research, teaching, and service demands (Gaff and Lambert 1996).

In addition, the early AAC&U project and the PFF program include partnerships between research universities and a small cluster of diverse, primarily undergraduate institutions. According to Gaff and Pruitt (1996), "This arrangement brings the *consumers* of Ph.D. programs into contact with the *producers* and provides opportunities for graduate students to gain personal experience with different types of institutions, faculty cultures, and student bodies."

An often overlooked aspect of faculty life is that of service. Mentored experiences with faculty from partner institutions allows graduate students to experience first-hand the expectations and values inherent in university service, particularly in the university's governance system.

Faculty preparation programs which seek to redefine graduate education to include a more balanced preparation for a future faculty position necessitate that initiatives be considered in concert with the graduate curriculum. Thus, the leadership needs to be provided by the dean of the graduate school as well as the departmental faculty. To promote the culture change referred to by Hutchings (1993), the success of these efforts may be directly tied to the ability of the graduate dean and respected departmental faculty to elicit the support and involvement of other faculty in their departments and at partner institutions. These contributors often work closely with the director of the TA or faculty development program.

Successful faculty preparation programs provide graduate students with a better understanding of faculty roles and of diverse institutions. This understanding, in conjunction with participation in a strong TA development program and collaboration with faculty mentors, results in graduate students who are better prepared to succeed as future faculty members. An investment in such programs during graduate study has the potential to decrease stress among new faculty, and also to save hiring institutions the time and money invested in hiring new faculty who are not prepared to succeed in their institutions. Experience in a faculty preparation program also should allow new faculty to get up to speed sooner.

COMMONALITIES BETWEEN FACULTY PREPARATION PROGRAMS AND TA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Perhaps the most important commonality in both programs is that they ultimately seek to improve the quality of undergraduate instruction in the academy. Motivated by this common purpose and the importance of preparing future faculty to be well-rounded teachers, the lines between the programs are often blurred, but they are nonetheless distinctive. What one institution identifies as a TA Program might be considered a faculty preparation initiative on another campus. Thus it becomes important for program leaders to share program content, successes, and disappointments as widely as possible to allow educators to fully grasp the commonalty and distinctions of the two programs.

A TA development program may very well be a necessary component of a faculty preparation program. If neither is in place, one can begin with an effective TA development program. Then, as the program evolves, program leaders can establish a faculty preparation program. In most cases, TA development is more appropriate than faculty preparation efforts in the early stages of a graduate student's tenure (Pruitt 1995). It has been shown that graduate students with the foundation of a TA development program are better prepared to succeed with more advanced teaching experiences and are better suited to work with faculty mentors as junior colleagues (Sprague and Nyquist 1991).

Institutions that have not developed a comprehensive TA development initiative can use a modest TA program as a tangible starting point. In some instances, TA initiatives also allow programs to build on existing strengths. Most departments have faculty members who are committed to teaching and mentoring graduate students to succeed in their teaching assistant assignments.

In addition, both types of programs tend to benefit from a combination of both centrally organized, university-wide, and decentralized departmental components; assessment of effectiveness as an undergraduate instructor; the use of teaching portfolios; strong faculty role models in the department; attention to the institutional climate in which they operate; and graduate student participation in planning and development.

Early results from Syracuse University's assessment of the Future Professoriate Project and the AAC&U and CGS's Preparing Future Faculty program indicate that graduate students are reaping the benefits of involvement in both these programs. The PFF program distributed a survey in 1995 and 1996 to graduate students and faculty members who had participated in the program. The students cited the program as worthwhile, all but 3 of 357 noting that they would recommend the PFF program to other students. Many students noted the value of working with partner institutions in improving their teaching. Their experiences highlighted the need for good teaching, and work with their faculty mentors enabled them to learn about their own strengths and weaknesses. They also noted an increased understanding of the nature of faculty work and, in particular, the need to juggle varied responsibilities. Others reported the value in working with faculty members and graduate students in their own academic department, as well as other departments on campus (Gaff & Pruitt-Logan 1997).

At Syracuse University, phone interviews with over seventy alumni who had participated in the Future Professoriate Project revealed that over ninety percent had secured employment in the type of position they were seeking. In addition, virtually every participant felt that their involvement in the FPP had been helpful to them in securing and succeeding in their positions. In both the PFF program and FPP the participants said that they benefited from the career guidance that the activities in the programs' generated. In fact, it was not uncommon to hear that involvement in these programs was one of the highlights of participants' careers as graduate students.

Early indicators are that these programs have a positive effect on career placement in an academic position, retention of graduate students as they become more fully involved in their department, and recruitment of top quality graduate students to study at institutions that offer a preparing future faculty program (Gaff & Pruitt-Logan 1997).

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM AN EFFECTIVE TA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO A PREPARING FUTURE FACULTY PROGRAM

Preparing Future Faculty programs move beyond an emphasis on teaching. Through collaboration with diverse partner institutions they introduce graduate students to the range of responsibilities they will encounter as faculty members and to the differences involved when working at an institution other than a research university. At the University of Minnesota, establishing a successful PFF program transformed their TA development program. In many other cases, universities that have established successful PFF programs where able to effectively build upon successful TA development programs (e.g., Northwestern University, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Washington). The following factors should be considered when establishing a Preparing Future Faculty program.

1) *Opportunity to Work With Mentors.* Faculty mentoring opportunities need to be available to all graduate students involved in the program. A list of expectations or general guidelines available for all program participants will clarify for both mentors and graduate students the appropriate expectations for the relationship. In addition, seminars, workshops, or consultations should be offered for faculty members who want to explore strategies and/or issues related to mentoring. In most cases, a graduate student needs the opportunity to work with multiple faculty mentors, not just the traditional research mentor.

2) *Access to Advanced Teaching Assignments.* Some senior teaching assistants already have access to advanced teaching assignments, including, curriculum development, student advising, independent teaching, or working with an upper division course. In order for faculty preparation programs to be successful, participants must routinely have access to these experiences.

3) *Opportunities to Participate in Academic Service Activities.* Faculty preparation programs must introduce and explore the multiple roles and expectations of junior faculty. They must also provide opportunities for graduate students to gain experience in

balancing these responsibilities. For example, participants in faculty preparation programs should attend, or if possible, serve on faculty committees, attend faculty or departmental meetings, or participate in faculty development activities.

4) *Access to Professional Development and Career Development Programs.* Faculty preparation programs must offer seminars and encourage discussion among graduate students and faculty mentors about alternative career opportunities and preparation for the academic job search.

5) *Faculty Involvement and Leadership.* Faculty involvement and leadership are necessary if the ethos of the department and institution are to change. It is important for the graduate dean to establish contacts and elicit the support of key departmental faculty. Involvement of senior faculty who are respected by their colleagues as researchers, teachers, and contributors to service is critical. Faculty with this stature are well positioned to lead departmental discussions about what needs to be modified, eliminated, or added to the graduate program. They are also well positioned to garner support for the initiative from their faculty colleagues and, in some cases the chair of the department or the graduate program. Department chairs may be helpful in recruiting support from the appropriate senior faculty members.

6) *Establishment of Partnerships With Diverse Institutions.* Faculty preparation programs require that the program leaders create and manage an interinstitutional cluster of diverse institutions. This requires the involvement of local undergraduate institutions. The more diverse the undergraduate institutions, the richer the experience for the graduate students. This recruitment requires commitment from chief academic officers and some departmental faculty at the partner institutions. In addition, once the program has been established, it is essential that someone manage the day-to-day operations of the efforts. This can be particularly challenging when dealing with several institutions and multiple departments in each institution. Respecting the diversity of the institutions, keeping the lines of communication open, and providing a flexible framework for implementation may help with this challenge. Several universities have found that graduate student coordinators can maintain communication among the various institutions involved, including coordination with leaders and mentors at partner institutions.

The aforementioned areas are intended to provide guidelines, not to prescribe a model to be replicated from one institution to another. Both TA development programs and faculty preparation initiatives must be tailored to the institution's or cluster's unique climate. While it is likely that we can learn from successes and failures at other institutions, there will not be a single template that can be used to establish successful programs for every institution.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Whether a campus is reexamining its efforts or initiating a program at any level, there are several issues that should be considered. They include: providing more uniform opportunities and experiences for graduate students. Although many TA programs invite all graduate students to participate, most faculty preparation programs are more selective. Faculty preparation programs are not appropriate for all graduate students. They are designed primarily for the graduate students interested in a career in the academy. Another consideration is what, if anything, can departments do to enhance the quality of graduate education for those who are not interested in an academic career?

A possible next step is to think more broadly about reconsidering the graduate curriculum to prepare graduate students for the range of careers that they are likely to pursue, as recommended by the COSEPUP report (1995): modifying the academic reward structure to adequately compensate faculty for their valuable contributions to TA development and faculty preparation programs; recruiting faculty members as mentors and ensuring that they are adequately prepared for their role. Mentors must be prepared to work with graduate students to keep the appropriate balance between program involvement and scholarly pursuit; ensuring that participation in these efforts does not significantly add to the time it takes to earn the degree; managing the difficulties that come from collaborating with diverse institutions. The more diverse the institutions and the more departments that are involved, the greater the advantage to the graduate students but the more complex the implementation.

Efforts should have an ongoing assessment component that promotes continuous improvement, collecting data to determine the effectiveness of both types of programs. The results of such assessment, including methods, challenges, and findings, should be shared widely. Sharing success stories and failures may help leaders of graduate education further understand the relationship between TA development efforts and faculty preparation programs. Using data to explore the strengths and limitations of both approaches will further inform these efforts and enhance the quality of both graduate and undergraduate education at our institutions.

While this list is not exhaustive, it is intended to further the discourse about improving the graduate experience. Thoughtful feedback from a variety of editors helped to clarify the commonalities and intersections between the two types of programs. While commonalities do exist in some programs, particularly pertaining to the enhanced preparation for teaching, it is the wider view of preparing future faculty programs which include preparation for service responsibilities and the experiences at diverse partner institutions that holds the greatest promise of more fully preparing graduate students for life in the academy.

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CGS

The Council of Graduate Schools is an organization of institutions of higher education in North America engaged in graduate education, research, scholarship, and the preparation of candidates for advanced degrees. Its membership includes 410 universities, granting 97 percent of doctoral degrees awarded in the United States.

For more information on PFF programs contact:

www.preparing-faculty.org

Jerry Gaff
Director of PFF
and Vice President, AAC&U
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202/387–3760
www.aacu-edu.org

Anne S. Pruitt-Logan
Co-Director of PFF
and Dean-in-Residence, CGS
One Dupont Circle, Suite 430
Washington, DC 20036
202/223–3791
www.cgs.net.org

Ric Weibl
Program Manager of PFF
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202/884-7423